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ABSTRACT

This document presents advice from the United Kingdom's Basic Skills Agency regarding developing local action plans. The first 20% of the document defines basic skills and discusses the following action plan components: (1) an estimate of the area's need for basic skills training; (2) a target to reduce the area's estimated scale of need; (3) details of how basic skills learning will be promoted to adults; (4) a description of the range of programs to be provided; (5) information about program quality standards; (6) plans for coordination and monitoring; and (7) a cost estimate. The remaining 80% of the document consists of case studies based on three unidentified areas of England and Wales that are considered representative of the country's different areas. They illustrate possible action plans for the following areas: (1) a city with a low level of wealth creation, a preponderance of low-wage jobs, and a sizable population from minority groups; (2) a county with relatively low levels of unemployment that was characterized by rapid growth in the 1970s and 1980s and whose population is becoming increasingly multicultural; and (3) a poor rural county with a rather disperse population of 485,000, 392,000 of whom are adults. (MN)

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ED 457 404

The Basic Skills Agency

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Adult Basic Skills

Developing a Local Action Plan

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Contents

Foreword	2
Background	3
Definition	3
The Elements of an Action Plan	4
Promotion	5
Example Case Studies	7
A Basic Skills Plan for Leadingham (2000-2003)	7
The County of Crayshire	16
Action Plan for Crayshire	16
Bradshire – about our County	25
A Basic Skills Plan for Bradshire (2000-2003)	25
Bradshire Development Plan August 2000 – July 2001	31
References	35

Adult Basic Skills

Developing a Local Action Plan

The Basic Skills Agency

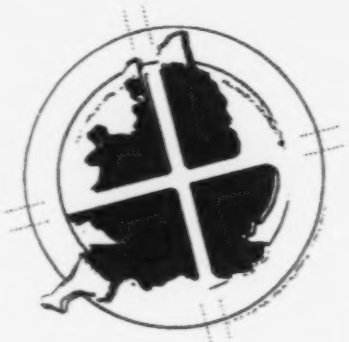
Foreword

THIS booklet has been published to help those involved in producing action plans to reduce the number of adults with poor basic skills. It should be of interest to people involved in Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs), Learning Partnerships and those involved in making basic skills provision for adults including colleges, adult and community education services, voluntary organisations and private and public sector employers.

We have not attempted to set out the elements of each individual action plan for each area of England. This would not be sensible. However, we have tried to set out what we believe should be included in all action plans and provided some examples of what an action plan might look like in different areas. We have not identified these areas by name because they are merely representative of different types of geographical areas in England.

I am grateful for the help we have been given by colleagues working in basic skills. They have contributed ideas and suggested how we might make this advice booklet as helpful as possible. I hope that you find the advice and guidance about action plans helpful.

Alan Wells
Director
The Basic Skills Agency



Background

A FRESH START, sometimes referred to as the Moser Report, was published in March 1999. *A Fresh Start* proposed that three year Basic Skills Action Plans to reduce the number of adults with poor basic skills should be produced and that these should be:

6**tightly focused on meeting specific aims and achieving agreed targets**9**.**

A Fresh Start proposes that an action plan should be supplemented by an annual operational programme.

It goes on to say that:

6**we propose that all future 'public purse' funding for basic skills provision for adults should be geared to these Action Plans**9**.**

What follows is the advice of the Basic Skills Agency about developing action plans. It should be useful for anyone involved in drawing up action plans as part of the government's strategy to reduce the number of adults with poor basic skills. This includes Learning and Skills Councils, (LSCs), Local Learning Partnerships and individual institutions such as colleges, LEA adult and community education services and organisations in the voluntary sector.

Definition

IT'S important to be clear about what should be covered by an action plan. The accepted definition of basic skills is:

6the ability to read, write and speak in English, and use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general9.

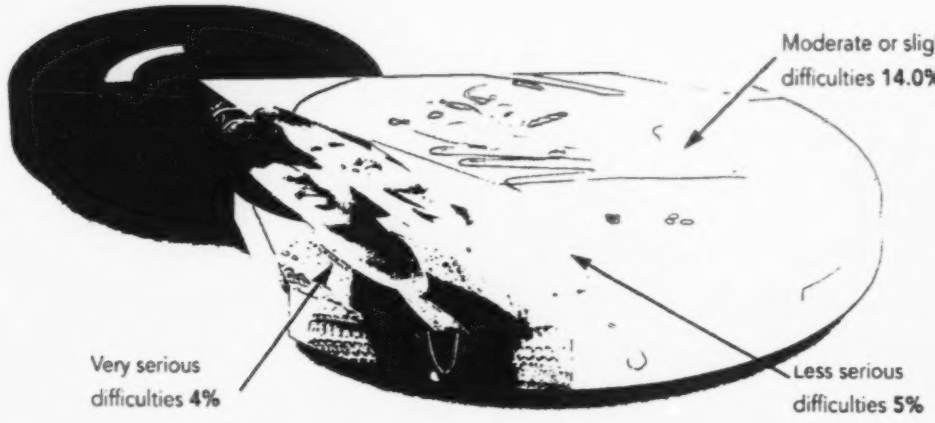
In brief, this means communication skills, particularly oracy, reading, writing and spelling and basic numeracy. The accepted estimate of the number of adults (i.e. people over the age of 16) with poor basic skills is 23% or some 7 million people in England. These adults can be divided by attainment into 3 broad groups.

- 20% who have very serious difficulties with basic skills.
- 20% who have less serious difficulties but still struggle.
- 60% who have moderate or slight difficulties with basic skills.

All of these adults should be the focus of an action plan, although you might also want to include some other groups. For instance, adults above Level 1 but below Level 2. Level 2 (what we would expect a young person to be able to do at Key Stage 3) is recognised as the 'jumping off' for access to semi-skilled and skilled jobs and to much further education and training. *A Fresh Start* recognised, however, that including all adults below Level 2 would be very ambitious when we have such a high number of people in more serious need.

It's also estimated that just under 500,000 adults for whom English is not the first language, have difficulties with either speaking, understanding, reading or writing English. A small group set up by the Technical Implementation Group (TIG) at the DfEE is considering how an adult basic skills strategy might relate to English language learners. However, we believe that it would be sensible to address the somewhat distinct needs of this group in basic skills action plans

Although the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is not included in the accepted definition of basic skills, *A Fresh Start* recognised the important role ICT plays in the development of basic skills in adults. It motivates and provides a new approach for many people who have failed using more traditional methods.



The Elements of an Action Plan

AS the specialist agency for basic skills, we believe that every basic skills action plan should include:

(a) an estimate of the number of people over the age of 16 years with poor basic skills in the area;

(b) a target to reduce the estimated scale of need in the area, supplemented by other key targets including participation in organised basic skills programmes, retention, progress rates and qualifications achieved, including information on how these targets will be reached;

(c) details of how basic skills learning opportunities will be promoted to adults;

(d) a description of the range of programmes that would be provided, based on an analysis of the diversity required to meet local needs, including any 'experimental programmes' that would help meet need;

(e) information about the quality standards met by programmes;

(f) how the action plan will be co-ordinated and monitored;

(g) an estimate of the cost of the action plan.

An Estimate of Need

It's important that an action plan is based on an objective estimate of the need in the area covered by the plan. Without an estimate of need, it's impossible to develop an effective action plan. So subjective estimates or 'guesstimates' of the scale of need would not, in our view, be good enough.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALs) published in 1997 is the accepted evidence of need in Great Britain. IALs estimates that approximately 7 million adults have significant difficulties with literacy and/or numeracy. This is that the literacy and numeracy skills they possess are below Level 1 for literacy and below Entry level for numeracy.

The Agency has updated its information on the scale of need in different areas of England to take account of the higher estimate of need produced from the IALs than previous surveys undertaken for the Agency. This provides a reliable estimate of need for different areas of England and can be used as the basis for estimating need in any area of England.

Targets

A Fresh Start recommended that 'the Government should commit itself to the virtual elimination of functional illiteracy and innumeracy'. *A Fresh Start* also proposed a more immediate national target that by 2010 the aim should be to reduce by half the number of adults of working age with low literacy skills. This would mean that 3.5 million adults would reach an acceptable level of literacy and numeracy in the next ten years.

There are a number of ways of setting an overall local target. One is to allow different areas to establish different targets within an agreed band in recognition of the different levels of need in different areas.

An alternative approach – and one that we favour – is for each area to adopt the national target and to use differential funding to recognise that some areas have a higher need than others. So we suggest that action plans should have an aspirational target of elimination and a more immediate target of reducing the estimated level of need by 50% by 2010.

Action plans will also need to have a number of other targets including:

- the target number of learners in particular types of organised programmes;
- the target retention rate overall and for particular types of programmes and courses;
- target progress rates;
- target number of qualifications at each level.

Promotion

IT'S important that an action plan sets out how basic skills is to be promoted to adults. This is not just the promotion of opportunities to join basic skills programmes, including opportunities for informal learning, but also the promotion of the importance of, and the crucial role that, basic skills play in almost everyone's life.

At present the number of adults actively involved in improving literacy and numeracy is merely the 'tip of the iceberg' of need. This is not just the case in the UK but in most other industrialised countries. So we will need a 'step-change' if we're to reach the ambitious national target and help improve the lives of a substantial number of adults. This means promoting a learning culture and a 'can do' approach; this will require imagination and energy.

So an action plan will need to include information on an effective local campaign to promote basic skills, related to regional and national campaigns. An action plan should also describe community outreach measures designed to increase the number of adults with good basic skills in the area covered by the plan.

Range of Learning Opportunities

It's important that a wide range of learning opportunities and programmes are available to help adults improve basic skills. Not all adults will want to improve their basic skills in the same way. Someone with very serious difficulties may know that they need fairly intensive and specialist help and will look for opportunities that provide this. Others, with fairly modest difficulties that require 'brushing up' rather than intensive teaching, may want to simply buy a 'self-help' book or CD and work largely unaided.

Recent research suggests that it takes at least 600 hours of study to have a significant effect on the standard of a student's basic skills at entry (the most basic) level. Currently very few learners study basic skills for more than six hours per week. It seems reasonable therefore to suggest that learners' basic skills needs should be addressed through a broader spectrum of learning programmes.

We believe that every action plan should address a wide range of learning opportunities, including:

1. Programmes for Young People
2. Programmes for the Unemployed
3. Workplace Programmes
4. Trade Union Programmes
5. Learn Direct (University for Industry) Programmes
6. Community Based Programmes
7. Basic Skills Support in Colleges
8. 'Dedicated' Basic Skills Courses
9. Family Based Programmes
10. Experimental Pilot Programmes.

The scale of the opportunities to be provided will need to be described in an action plan and will need to relate closely to an analysis of the diversity of need in the area covered by the action plan. Certainly a balance will need to be struck – and justified – between the different types of opportunity provided. Where it's decided that a specific type of learning opportunity should not be included, the reason for this should be set out in the action plan, including evidence to support this conclusion.

The targets for each type of learning opportunity should be clearly stated for each year covered by the action plan. These learning opportunity targets should be consistent with the overall target and with action plan targets.

There's a continuing need for innovation in basic skills. As the Moser Group discovered, there are still many unanswered questions in basic skills work with adults. We need to know more about what motivates different individuals and groups, what type of provision is best suited to different needs, what teaching works best etc.

That's why we believe that an action plan should also describe programmes that are experimental and that will be funded as part of the funding of the action plan. These experimental programmes should operate over a specified period and should be objectively evaluated. During the period they operate they may be exempted from meeting the quality standards that have to be met by all other programmes funded as part of the action plan.

Quality Standards

The quality of basic skills provision varies considerably. In some areas it's of high quality whereas in others even minimum quality standards are not being met. It's important that all programmes meet agreed quality standards. We share the views, contained in the Learning and Skills Council Prospectus and elsewhere, that programmes that fail to meet these standards should not receive funding.

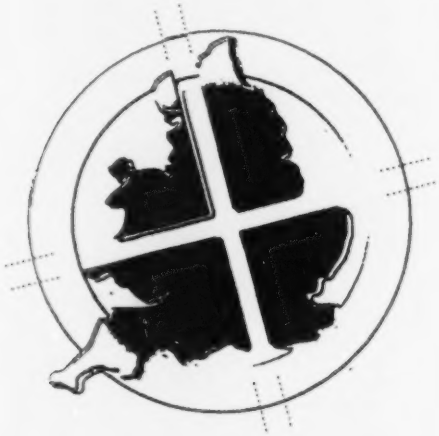
The new Adult Inspectorate will be responsible for inspecting basic skills provision for adults over the age of 19 years. They will set out a quality framework for basic skills programmes when they begin to operate. It is also clear that the local Learning and Skills Councils will play a significant role in quality assurance and contract compliance. In the meantime, we believe that programmes should attempt to 'benchmark' themselves against the revised Basic Skills Quality Mark for Post-16 Programmes. The elements of this focus on estimating need, planning, target setting, staff training and effective teaching.

Co-ordination and Monitoring

An action plan will only be effective if it is coherent, has clear steps to be completed in an agreed time scale and is well co-ordinated and monitored. This is particularly the case where a number of different partners are involved. So the action plan should set out how it is to be co-ordinated and monitored. This should include information about who is responsible for co-ordination and monitoring, any specific groups that will be involved and any regular meetings, such as user feedback meetings and how progress will be regularly reported-back to the partnership.

Estimated Cost

It's essential that an estimate of the costs of the action plan is included. This should set out the estimated cost for each specific activity (promotion, provision etc) and the total cost over the period covered by the action plan. Of course these costs will be 'best estimates' but some indication should be given as to how the estimated costs have been arrived at.



Example Case Studies

BELOW we have set out example case studies based on different areas of England. We have not identified the areas, but we believe that they are typical of different kinds of areas of England. These example draft action plans are not meant to be exemplars. Rather they are examples of what an action plan might look like. We believe that they will form a useful guide for all those who may be involved in producing an adult basic skills action plan.

A Basic Skills Plan for Leadingham (2000-2003)

LEADINGHAM has a population of 800,000, 20% of whom are from ethnic minority groups. Levels of unemployment are close to the national average but the city's wealth creation is low, with many residents being employed in low wage jobs. There is a substantial skills gap which is projected to close slowly over the next few years. Levels of attainment at primary school have increased rapidly to be close to national averages, but achievement and attainment amongst young people aged 14-19 remains well below the levels needed for employability.

The traditional manufacturing base of the city is still important but has undergone large-scale reduction in size, coupled with a demand for higher skill levels. New technology and information based jobs have been created but more than 28% of these are taken by people who are not resident in the city – adding to the traffic flow across the main city routes.

Some areas of the city are showing signs of high levels of young people's disengagement from accepted social practices. Levels of homelessness are increasing, particularly amongst the 30-45 age group. Young people leaving care are a particularly vulnerable group.

Fairly sophisticated data now exists on participation and achievement rates for a wide range of target groups and concerted efforts are being made to co-ordinate work with these groups. Levels of health indicators vary widely across the city with massive discrepancies between the 3 most deprived wards and the 3 least deprived wards.

The city has 3 universities and 8 colleges of further education. The City Council has a directly managed Adult Education Service and an active Social Regeneration Unit which has strong links with voluntary organisations. The Voluntary Service Council is active in managing a number of developments and in representing the voluntary sector at a strategic level.

Leadingham TEC is coterminous with the City Council and with the Health Authority. The major education and training bodies in the city have an established set of productive partnership workings covering widening participation; information, advice and guidance; basic skills developments; etc. The Lifelong Learning Partnership works through these various existing partnership mechanisms.

A Basic Skills Action Plan

Vision: the virtual elimination of functional illiteracy and innumeracy in Leadingham.

Key objectives:

- to reduce the number of adults with poor basic skills by 50% by 2010
- to reduce the number of adults with poor basic skills by 20% by 2005
- to provide a range of diverse learning opportunities accessible to adults with poor basic skills in Leadingham by 2002
- to ensure that all basic skills provision meets minimum quality standards by 2002

1. Estimate of need in Leadingham

26% of adults in Leadingham are believed to be below the standard expected of 11 year olds (level 4 at Key Stage 2) in literacy. Twice this number are below the level expected of 11 year olds in numeracy. An estimated 50,000 people whose first language is not English have little command of the English Language.

City-wide disaggregation by 3 levels of ability is shown in the table below.

Disaggregation of basic skills needs into target groups

Number of Adults 16-64		**544,000**
Number of these with basic skills needs		**141,440**
high level basic skills	medium level basic skills	very low level basic skills
83,200	**28,800**	**29,440**

- The 83,200 with higher level basic skills need to brush up the required skills in order to move above the functional threshold.
- The 28,800 with medium level basic skills may need short term focused provision, related to their particular vocational or social context.
- The 29,440 with very low levels of basic skills need intensive, longer term support.

Further disaggregation of these global figures by age, employment status etc will help to align these needs with programmes that offer solutions: e.g. the majority of the 16-24 year olds with very low levels of basic skills are likely to be participants, or potential participants, in programmes for the young unemployed.

2. Aim: National and Leadingham aspirations

The aim in Leadingham is to reduce the overall number of adults with basic skills below level 1 by 50% by 2010, with an interim target of a 20% reduction by 2005.

In order to do this not only must substantially more adults have their basic skills needs assessed and be engaged in opportunities to address their assessed needs, but there needs to be a dramatic increase in the numbers achieving level 1. This will require attention to retention rates and to issues around achievement.

The first beneficiaries of the primary school National Literacy Strategy will not leave secondary school until 2007. The adult figures from the table above suggest that the targets can be met by lifting 7,072 adults per year above the threshold. However, because the pool of need will continue to be swollen by school leavers (at least for the next 3 years) the real number of basic skills achievers needs to be an average of 8,000 per year for the next 10 years.

3. Scale and range of provision to meet this need

a. volume

There are a number of returns that give data on adult basic skills participation. These are collected in different ways and in different formats. It has been possible to cross reference these returns to provide relatively reliable figures for the numbers of individuals currently in programmes and receiving support to enhance their basic skills.

These are listed below:

Literacy/ Numeracy	ESOL	Basic skills support on vocational training	Basic skills in workplace	Family literacy/ numeracy
Numbers				
3134	**4160**	**2291**	**61**	**228**
			Total	**9874**

Up to now few records have been kept, on any consistent basis, of the achievement rate in relation to curriculum levels. Delivery organisations are just beginning to set their own targets for participation, retention and achievement. Nationally the rate of achievement of functional basic skills is estimated at ⅓ of those in provision each year. This needs to be at least doubled. An ambitious target, meanwhile, is that (by 2003) 50% of participants will be achieving at level 1 or above. Eventually, to produce >8,000 new achievers/year, there will need to be >18,000 new participants/year in effective learning opportunities.

The 3 year objectives in this plan demonstrate the way that organisational developments can be related to city and national target aspirations by increasing the rates of achievement and doubling the numbers participating across a broader range of higher quality activities.

b. quality

At the moment the varied sets of provision are working to different quality standards.

HM Prison Leadingham (in common with all other Prison Service establishments) holds the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, as does the LEA Adult Education Service, and 3 of the colleges. Of the other organisations that currently deliver high-volume basic skills programmes, most are working towards the new Quality Mark framework as a way of demonstrating their commitment to quality basic skills processes for teaching and learning.

The 3 year objectives of this plan outline the expectations and support that organisations will be able to draw on in raising the quality of their own programmes.

c. diversity

It is clear that the aspirational targets are not going to be met by the simple expansion of current provision. Major new forms of delivery will be introduced. These include:

- basic skills programmes via Learndirect activity;
- the expansion of workplace basic skills led by employers and key intermediaries in the workforce;
- building the capacity of the voluntary sector to be able to deliver basic skills as part of their services to the groups that are regarded as socially excluded;
- expanding the use of paraprofessionals;
- the skilling of intermediaries within probation, health, justice services, housing, community groups etc.

The 3 year objectives of this plan outline how a wider diversity of provision will be attained.

The 10 year task can be represented in the table below:

Year	Numbers working on their basic skills	% achieving	Numbers achieving	Increase in level (from school etc)	Net reduction in basic skills needs	Level of basic skills need remaining
2000 baseline	9,874	30		3,000		141,440
targets						
2000-2001	12,000	40	4,800	2,000	2,800	138,640
2001-2002	15,000	50	7,500	2,000	5,500	133,140
2002-2003	15,000	50	7,500	1,000	6,500	126,640
2003-2004	16,000	50	8,000	1,000	7,000	110,640
2004-2005	18,000	50	9,000	1,000	8,000	111,640
2005-2006	18,000	50	9,000	1,000	8,000	103,640
2006-2007	18,000	50	9,000	1,000	8,000	95,640
2007-2008	18,000	50	9,000	500	8,500	87,140
2008-2009	18,000	50	9,000	500	8,500	78,640
2009-2010	18,000	60	10,800	500	10,300	68,340

4. Three year Objectives

4.1 Achieve 10% reduction in level of need, by 2003

The strategic and business plans of key organisations in Leadingham make reference to a need to develop increased amounts of work with people without qualifications; refugees and asylum seekers; young disengaged people; ex-offenders and those within the youth offending system; low skill workers; particular communities that are under represented in the workforce or who are not taking up training opportunities; young people leaving care; people who are homeless or have drug/alcohol dependency; people with disabilities. All of these target groups are traditionally associated with lower than average levels of basic skills.

In addition to these planned expansions in provision a number of new mechanisms are being introduced that will increase, annually, the numbers whose basic skills are addressed:

a. From 1/4/00 every offender's pre-sentencing report is required to make a statement about the person's level of basic skills. The Youth Offending Service will undertake developments to increase levels of basic skills awareness and initial assessment.

b. The range of personal advisers associated with the variety of gateways being put in place will be trained re basic skills; this, plus curriculum and staff development work within New Deal, youth service and careers programmes, will lead to higher rates of achievement via established programmes for young people. This will be supported by the introduction of the national test (and its 'quick test' version) within such programmes.

c. Leadingham TEC have developed an employer basic skills development plan, which identifies as key elements: linking employers with external advisers; the skilling of company intermediaries (including union learning representatives); increasing employer awareness; strengthening the basic skills knowledge of business advisers etc.

d. The number of Learndirect and other ICT centres, including learning centres on employers premises, is planned to increase over the next 3 years. These centres are increasingly being networked with other grids for learning. This will soon enable basic skills materials to be widely distributed through inter-connected networks.

e. The Health Authority will undertake work to link health improvement target work with basic skills.

f. There is a planned increase, via the Standards Fund, of school based family literacy and family numeracy courses. New models of family literacy/numeracy will be developed that are library research-skills led; workplace led; further education led.

g. The attention being given to enhancing basic skills achievement within all vocational and prevocational training programmes will bring more bridging activity, more focused assessment tools, based on the new standards, and staff/curriculum development to improve rates of success.

h. Providers in Leadingham are identifying basic skills as growth curriculum targets, using the expansion of FEFC funding for mainstream community based learning, and additional resources to target non participating groups. It is expected that annual planned increases will also be supported by the local Learning and Skills Council that covers the Leadingham area.

i. The need to increase diversity of provision will continue to require a number of new pilot activities. These will include the introduction of intensive, context-focused provision to meet the specific needs of adults with higher levels of basic skills.

j. The Basic Skills Agency has recommended a national promotional strategy to the DfEE. Linking this to local promotions will stimulate some of the 83,200 higher basic skills groups to find ways to rapidly meet their own basic skills needs by a variety of self-supported means. Library services, and others, are equipping themselves with ICT and basic skills resources to be able to offer such support.

4.2 Increase the range and diversity of basic skills support by 2003

There will be a push to promote 'basic skills and their impact' not only within specific opportunities such as Adult Learners Week but also via a more sustained local campaign; in an attempt to galvanise people who don't think they have basic skills needs.

Basic skills activities will need to be inserted into a wide range of other activities. Each existing city strategy is being reviewed for its potential as a vehicle for basic skills. This means that an increase in the variety of basic skills provision will arise from the base of voluntary sector capacity building, community safety, corporate approaches to work with young people, area regeneration, the increased range of activities under the new Deal banner, health improvement processes etc.

The probation service, health authority trusts and social housing associations are establishing approaches that include addressing basic skills needs of service users and key roles of service intermediaries. Basic skills will also be promoted through the range of regeneration activities by linking basic skills with capacity building activities.

Much of the provision is still annual programmes of small numbers of hours/week. There will be a push for increased clarity, within such provision, concerning curriculum level, target group, lesson structure etc.

Following the Basic Skills Agency consultancy, in September 1999, it is clear that voluntary sector organisations need to play a more substantial role in promoting and meeting basic skills needs, but that they need to be strengthened to do so. A programme of infrastructure development is being planned with voluntary and community organisations, via Leadingham Voluntary Service Council and Leadingham TEC.

The development of ICT centres in Leadingham and the extensive distribution systems being put in place mean that the time is right to expand the anywhere/anytime approach to basic skills learning. There is a willingness of organisations in Leadingham to work together to give learners wider access to interactive materials.

Whilst it is recognised that low level of basic skills has an influence on the likelihood of sustained periods of employment, the majority of adults

with basic skills needs are employed and will remain employed during this period. Attaining the substantial numbers of achievers will require a structured, whole city approach to basic skills on employers' premises. An employers' basic skills development plan is being implemented by Leadingham TEC.

The approach to meeting the wider range of needs will include the development of menus of opportunities appropriate to different target groups. These will include the enhanced meeting of basic skills needs through:

- short courses for specific purposes;
- intensive programmes which deliver a substantial number of hours of learning in a short time, for a clear purpose;
- open and flexible learning, to support ICT/online basic skills in a variety of learning centres;
- New Deal and other programmes for unemployed;
- workplace programmes, including trade union programmes;
- college and Adult Education literacy and numeracy courses using the new curriculum to structure teaching and learning;
- programmes targeting particular groups of young people;
- basic skills support on further education and training programmes;
- family literacy and numeracy programmes;
- basic skills courses within the community;
- pilot/demonstration activities that will create sustainable new approaches;
- support for independent study.

Leadingham will need to draw on a balanced range of all of these opportunities in order, after 3 years to produce an annual total of 16,000 basic skills learners (of whom 8,000 are being lifted above Level 1). Annual operational plans will highlight the mix of developments, year on year, to reach the targets. Where organisational plans do not produce an adequate diversity of provision, gaps will be filled by commissioning particular developments.

4.3 Increase the quality of basic skills support for learners by 2003

Organisations across Leadingham are working towards standards that relate to the elements of the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark. The intention is that all organisations covered by this plan have achieved, or are working towards, recognised standards in basic skills delivery by 2003.

Delivery organisations will, during 2000-2001, have access to a national regime of tutor training re the new adult curriculum. This will be supplemented with a menu of additional customised support opportunities during the next 3 years. These opportunities will include:

- ICT support for basic skills; widened access to appropriate software;
- support for gaining the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark;
- resource boxes to support basic skills in different contexts;
- support for implementing the details of the new curriculum and assessment in various settings, adding to the national training;
- staff development for part-time tutors and staff working in detached settings;
- basic skills awareness, initial assessment, and increased access to national qualifications for tutors;
- curriculum development activities related to basic skills in specific contexts (citizenship; health; financial management etc);
- access to basic skills on-line training;
- training for key intermediaries and para-professionals.

It is anticipated that more than 300 staff per year will access these forms of support.

One major infrastructure issue facing delivery organisations is the availability of adequate numbers of skilled tutors. There will be a major programme of developing adequate numbers of volunteers, tutors and learning support workers to match the planned expansion of numbers. This will be done through use of the new Basic Skills Online programme, through the training of

key intermediaries (including Union Learning Reps) and a supported expansion of new volunteer and tutor training, matching the new tutor training standards as far as these are known. It is intended to train 300 new staff over the three year period.

Monitoring and co-ordination of developments

The Leadingham Local Learning Partnership operates through a series of existing partnerships. For the purpose of promoting and co-ordinating basic skills developments the relevant body is the Leadingham Basic Skills Forum.

Sufficient resources exist, within the members of the Leadingham Basic Skills Forum, and the Local Learning Partnership, to enable these developments to be achieved. Many of the activities are already contained within the business plans/development plans of the relevant organisations.

Progress against the Annual Operational Plan and 3 Year Targets will be formally reported, at least 6 monthly, to the members of the Local Learning Partnership and, when in place, the local Learning and Skills Council. Responsibility for this reporting rests with the development officer attached to the Leadingham Basic Skills Forum.

Additional Operational Plan 2000-2001

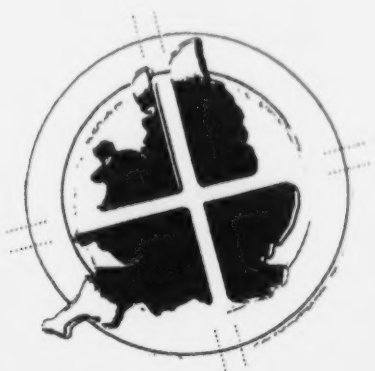
1. Improve planning and coherence

Element	Milestone/Target Date	Via	Cost	Funding
1.1 Establish communication processes to ensure that organisations in Leadingham are aware of changes and developments	July 2000; plan and context out to key organisations	Basic Skills Forum		
1.2 Local Learning Partnership adopt planning framework; and promotion of this as a template for use by a range of organisations	July 2000; endorsed by executive group	Lifelong Learning Partnership		
1.3 Build on the established links with the Basic Skills Agency, the DfEE, and Regional Development Agency in order to contribute to national and regional developments	July 2000; Circulate plan to Basic Skills Agency; Regional Development Agency; DfEE; Government Office	Lifelong Learning Partnership		
1.4 Refine the basis for the disaggregation of level of need, to provide enhanced data for future annual plans	December 2000; discussion with Basic Skills Agency	Basic Skills Forum		
1.5 Align organisational targets and aspirations with city and national targets	June 2000, Development plans of key organisation built in	Basic Skills Forum		
1.6 Adjust the Basic Skills Plan in light of any declared national strategy	November 2000; plan revised	Basic Skills Forum		

2. Reduce level of need by 2% (Increase engagement from 10,000 to 12,000)

Element	Milestone/Target Date	Via	Cost	Funding
2.1 Strengthen capacity of Youth Offending Service; Personal Advisers; Foyer workers; Youth Service workers and Careers Service workers – to achieve 500 referrals for basic skills support (within the New Start target groups) into provision below.	• Links established between providers and key intermediary groups (May 00) Contracted developments in place (July 00) and reviewed (Dec 00) • Training Plan implemented (Oct 00) and reviewed (Dec 00)	FE Providers New Start and Connexions Partnerships	119k	FEFC SRB
2.2 Enhance the assessment and curriculum delivery within programmes for the unemployed to achieve higher level of basic skills successes. 400 additional young people having basic skills needs met.	New Deal development plan reviewed (Feb 01)	Leadingham TEC	215k	
2.3 Build basic skills more securely into programmes of workforce development – Raise awareness and assessment skills of business advisers and in-company intermediaries – Promote sustainable models of workplace delivery – 4 employer briefing sessions – 100 new learners via employer support	Public Service Seminar (Apr 00) Employer Action Plan reviewed (Feb 01) Employer briefings by Dec 00	Leadingham TEC	370k	SRB
2.4 Increase numbers accessing basic skills support via Learndirect and other ICT centres. Work with 76 new learners.	Learndirect ICT centres operational, basic skills packages accessed (Dec 00)	Learndirect Hub Steering Group	30k	SRB FEFC/UfI
2.5 Increase the support to small community organisations, via the use of paraprofessions, to create 50 new learners	15 new community groups contacted and worked with (Dec 00)	Leadingham Voluntary Service Council	40k	aclf
2.6 Work through voluntary organisations to produce 50 new learners via a menu of staff training, organisational mentoring and provision of resource boxes to support basic skills	• 5 voluntary organisations doing enhanced basic skills work (Oct 00) • 10 voluntary organisations doing enhanced basic skills work by Mar 01 • Menu of training and support in place (Jan 01) • Strengthen basic skills of 20 key voluntary organisation staff (Dec 00)	Basic Skills Forum/ Leadingham Voluntary Service Council/ Leadingham TEC/Social Regeneration Unit/Youth Service	80k	Community Fund; SRB; EFS

Element	Milestone/Target Date	Via	Cost	Funding
2.7 Expand the use of ICT in community groups, working with 100 new learners	Menu of ICT/basic skills training and support available to 35 community groups (Oct 00) Use of laptops/ICT extended to >10 more groups (Jan 01)	Adult/further education providers	150k	DfEE; SRB; NOF
2.8 Establish models of health-led basic skills work, via joint working with Metropolis Health Authority. Work with 100 new learners	Curriculum-led new provision; 10 venues (Jan 01)	Health Trust/providers	4k	SRB
2.9 Expand the school-based family literacy and family numeracy courses, supported via The Standards fund, to include 200 new learners	24 new courses/workshops (Mar 01)	Education department	132k	Standards Fund for Schools
2.10 Develop new models of family basic skills activities that are library-led; workplace-led; further education led. 100 new learners	3 new models piloted (Oct 00)	Basic Skills Forum	40k	SRB
2.11 Expand community based adult learning groups, targeting non-participating groups, by an additional 700 learners. Work to align this provision with levels of the new curriculum, and ensure that at least 10% of this additional provision is intensive and focused upon particular skills areas	70 learners in intensive provision; Annual returns monitored (Feb 01)	Adult/further education providers	200k	FEFC
2.12 Pilo/experimental programmes to develop new, sustainable approaches. Work with 250 learners.	10 developmental programmes reviewed and 15 more planned (Jan 01)	Basic Skills Forum	30k	Standards Fund; SRB; FEFC
2.13 Produce self support matenals (and promote use) in range of venues e.g. libraries supporting independent learners	Materials in 20 libraries and other venues	Library Service	30k	Standards Fund; SRB



The County of Crayshire

CRAYSHIRE is a county of contrasts set in the centre of England, with a population of 610,000. The population grew rapidly during 1970's and 1980's and is increasingly multi-cultural in nature.

Levels of unemployment are low compared to the national average and the local economy has experienced sustained growth throughout the last decade. Overall the county has the fifth fastest growing economy in the UK (Annual Employment Survey) 69% of all employees work in the Service Sector and 25%, higher than the national average, in manufacturing. Employers have experienced difficulty in recruiting staff and low levels of basic skills have not significantly affected employment in low wage jobs. Many major national and international companies have made Crayshire the location for their national headquarters. Although still important as a centre for footwear and agricultural industries there has been diversification from the traditional industrial bases and there is a strong manufacturing base, growing service sector and important distributive role.

There is a university college in the county town and four FE colleges located in the largest towns across the county, one of the colleges has in recent years diversified from a specialist agriculture base. The County Council has recently established a Lifelong Learning Service that includes adult education with part of the Service as an external institution of the FEFC. All public sector education services have boundaries coterminous with the county boundary and a Lifelong Learning Partnership has been working to extend and develop previous good working relationships between partners in particular in the key areas of widening participation, basic skills and information advice and guidance.

Action Plan for Crayshire

1. Aims

This plan recognises the cost to the county's economy, to its social and cultural life and to the prospects of many of its citizens caused by poor levels of basic skills. It aims to provide a strategy for eradicating poor levels of basic skills so as to enable all its citizens to function fully in society.

2. The Current Situation in Crayshire

a. The Basic Skills Agency research into the scale of the problem indicates that approximately 50,000 adults have poor basic skills in Crayshire. *The Moser Report sets a national target of reaching 50% of people with basic skills requirements by 2010. This would suggest a target of 25,000 for Crayshire.* Currently, best estimates indicate that 3163 people, that is approximately 6% of people with basic skills needs, access some form of relevant provision – this includes many short-term projects and programmes, with only 15% of learners attending for more than six hours per week.

b. Currently, most people accessing basic skills support in Crayshire find their way to one of the further education colleges or adult education establishments. Other provision includes TEC led 'Life Skills' training projects in seven centres as part of the Government's Learning Gateway Strategy aimed at 16-18-year-olds who are not accessing or benefiting from mainstream education, training or employment, and courses run by the probation service and voluntary sector. A

number of innovative community-based programmes, including those sponsored by the Adult and Community Learning Fund, have met with success in broadening the access and scope of basic skills provision.

c. The level of need varies, not only from borough to borough, but also among wards. Of the estimated 50,000 adults with basic skills needs 28,000 are estimated to be in full-time employment, whilst another 8,000 are employed part-time. High employment rates are offset against low skill levels, including basic skills, amongst some population sectors. Employer-based provision is uneven, and generally focused upon larger companies.

d. Most classes accommodate learners studying at different levels, and sometimes mix both literacy and numeracy. Consequently many tutors find it difficult to use whole group teaching, or to generate group discussions with most learners receiving help on a one-to-one basis. There is some provision of distance learning, especially in rural areas.

e. Most centres offering basic skills have been awarded the Basic Skills Agency Quality Standards, and are working towards achieving the new Post-16 Quality Mark upon renewal.

f. The LEA's Lifelong Learning Services curriculum advisers and training managers provide centralised training, consultancy and advice, curriculum development and support, fund raising and project management services.

g. Agencies and organisations such as CareerPath and the Library Service have a vital role in initial identification, providing services such as independent basic skills assessment and sign-posting basic skills learning opportunities. Such organisations may also provide outreach to under-represented groups and in-depth guidance services. The new Local Advice, Information and Guidance (LIAG) network will target adults with basic skills needs.

h. The organisations and services indicated above provide delegates to the post-16 basic skills forum, a sub-group of the Lifelong Learning Partnership, who have contributed to this plan, and who will be commissioned to implement it by the Lifelong Learning Partnership.

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
1. A reduction of 50% in levels of functional illiteracy and innumeracy by 2010	By increasing: • Range of provision • Number and type of venues • Increasing Accessibility • Different ways of learning • Better learner guidance • Improved Quality • Better promotion	A further 850 people accessing basic skills provision by 2001 6000 accessing provision by 2002	12,000 people accessing basic skills provision by 2005	25,000 people having addressed their basic skills needs by 2010	Lifelong Learning Strategic Partnership Post-16 Basic Skills Forum	
	Improved Achievement/ Progression/ Retention	40% of all basic skills students, where such outcomes are measurable, to progress to other learning opportunities, paid employment or placements in the voluntary sector. All programmes to achieve an 85% retention rate(excluding drop-out due to un-preventable causes, such as illness, moving from area or employment) 70% of all basic skills learners to achieve accreditation where such accreditation is appropriate to their needs 75% of basic skills learners to show measurable progress between levels			Basic Skills Providers	

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
2. Diversity, choice and accessibility a. Provision of a wide range of free learning opportunities	Provision of Individual Learning Accounts The county to develop a strategy of targeting people with basic skills needs to take up ILAs: Adults who have successfully completed basic skills courses should be a priority target for the first million Individual Learning Accounts	20% of ILAs on offer in Crayshire to be targeted at people with basic skills needs by 2002 (subject to negotiation with Crayshire Chamber). Training and awareness programme in respect to ILAs in place by September 2000	25% of ILAs on offer in Crayshire to be targeted at people with basic skills needs by 2002 (subject to negotiation with Crayshire Chamber)	30% of ILAs on offer in Crayshire to be targeted at people with basic skills needs by 2002 (subject to negotiation with Crayshire Chamber).	Crayshire Chamber (TEC) and partners	Crayshire Chamber
	Providers to offer: More Literacy and Numeracy Courses (the greater number to be provided in urban areas) More intensive courses	An additional 400 learners by 2001, and 800 by 2002 25% of all basic skills delivery to be for more than 4 hours p.w. by 2002: 10% attending provision for 4 – 8 hours pw. 10% attending provision for 8 – 12 hours pw 5% attending provision for 12+ hours pw. to include a greater variety of course duration, intensity and modes of delivery. All basic skills students to have on-course, direct and easy access to ICT by 2001.	An additional 4000 learners by 2005 40% of all basic skills delivery to be for more than 4 hours p.w. by 2005: 15% attending provision for 4 – 8 hours pw. 15% attending provision for 8 – 12 hours pw 10% attending provision for 12+ hours pw. including a greater variety of course duration, intensity and modes of delivery.	An additional 8000 learners by 2010 50% of all basic skills delivery to be for more than 4 hours p.w. by 2010: 20% attending provision for 4 – 8 hours pw. 20% attending provision for 8 – 12 hours pw. 10% attending provision for 12+ hours pw. including a greater variety of course duration, intensity and modes of delivery.	Individual providers and local partnerships	FEFC LEA FEFC LEA FEFC UfI funding

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
	Access to ICT, including at Ufi centres and libraries. New ways of providing ICT and distance learning to be provided in rural areas Basic skills programmes receive advice and support to ensure that ICT is used effectively for teaching adult basic skills: Ways of funding access to new technology to be identified: The Learning Gateway to provide access to basic skills for 16 – 18 year olds	All basic skills teachers trained in using ICT by 2002 2 initial pilot projects developed in county employing ICT with basic skills students by December 2000 Information on funding ICT available initially by December 2000, then on-going.	On-going training and up-skilling	On-going training and up-skilling	Crayshire Ufi 'Hub'	
b. Provision of a wide diversity of places and programmes to increase participation:	Increasing support for unemployed, including expansion of role of New Deal Pre-recruitment programmes to be targeted at unemployed Job-search and up/re-skilling programmes to have increased basic skills input, including for learners in prisons.	2 pilot programmes run by 2002 to include 50 learners	20 targeted courses to include 500 learners	All unemployed people requiring support to receive it.	Lifelong Learning Partnership, Post-16 Basic Skills Forum and providers	FEFC LEA SRB
	Improved learning support in colleges and adult ed. by: Better initial screening and diagnosis; Wider range of basic skills learning opportunities	50% of all college students requiring support to receive it. All appropriate college students to be offered screening and initial assessment relevant to their needs by 2002	All college students requiring support to receive it.	All college students requiring support to receive it.		FEFC

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
	Family based programmes to include: Expansion of Family literacy and numeracy programmes, and other experimental programmes through development and implementation of county family learning policy in conjunction with schools, Health and Social Services, Libraries and Voluntary Sector	Family learning policy in place by 2001. All schools hosting family literacy or numeracy programmes to be offered continuation schemes by 2001 4 additional experimental pilots by 2002	All schools whose results are in the lowest 25% at Key Stage 1 and 2 to be offered family numeracy and/or literacy programmes by 2003	All schools where there are parents who need support to benefit from family literacy and/or numeracy programmes		DfEE Standards SRB FEFC LEA
	Expansion of community-led family learning programmes (following model(s) piloted in county through Adult and Community learning Fund)	200 additional people joining courses in their role as parents by 2002	1000 people joining courses in their role as parents by 2005	All people who need support accessing courses in their role as parents by 2010		ACLF and other project funding LEA FEFC
	Expansion of University for Industry courses using new technology	300 learners to be accessing basic skills at LearnDirect (Ufi) centres by 2001, 1000 by 2002.	2000 learners accessing basic skills at LearnDirect (Ufi) centres by 2005	4000 learners to be accessing basic skills at LearnDirect (Ufi) centres by 2010		FEFC funding for Ufi
	Tackling head-on the roles of employers and trades unions in providing workplace basic skills, including for agency workers. Colleges, adult ed. and Chamber to lead development of new experimental programmes with employers.	One additional experimental programme in each district by 2002, involving 100 learners across the county	Five employer-based and/or TU programmes in each district, involving 500 learners across the county	2000 people accessing employer-based or TU led basic skills programmes		FEFC LEA Chamber

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
	A range of experimental programmes for young people will be developed with the youth service, colleges, the probation service, prisons, Youth Offending Teams, social services the new Connexions Partnership and the voluntary sector. These may offer basic skills through other learning or activity vehicles.	One additional experimental programme in each district by 2002, involving 100 learners across the county.	5 programmes in each district by 2005, involving 500 learners across the county	1000 young people accessing basic skills support, other than through college or standard training opportunities.		LEA FEFC Project Funding
	Community based programmes will be developed in partnership with local communities and their organisations to build capacity for local people to manage their own learning opportunities. This may also involve borough and district councils, the Voluntary Sector, schools, local businesses, the Chamber, the Health Service and others. This may also link with area regeneration/ Neighbourhood Renewal schemes in such a way as to ensure that appropriate basic skills milestones and targets are embedded in corporate, district, borough and local strategic initiatives. These may have overt aims relating to raising achievement, or may relate to areas such as economic regeneration, community safety , housing or improvements to the health service.	One additional experimental programme in each district by 2002, involving 100 learners across the county. Detailed action plan in place in each of these areas by December 2000, to include targets and appropriate proposals for marketing, presentation and using a diversity of methods to attract and engage with basic skills learners.	5 programmes in each district by 2005, involving 500 learners across the county	1000 people accessing basic skills support, other than through college or standard training opportunities.		LEA/County Council FEFC Project Funding SRB

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
3. Promotion – guidance, assessment and publicity	An entitlement to confidential, free basic skills assessment and guidance for all adults with basic skills below level 2 (by basic skills teachers and advice and guidance professionals)	50% Increase in assessment and guidance for people with basic skills needs by 2002 50% increase in take-up of basic skills learning opportunities following guidance interviews by 2002	400 additional learners referred to basic skills providers by 2005	1000 additional learners referred by 2010	Guidance professionals Lifelong Learning Services, basic skills providers	CareerPath Library Service LEA
	Enhance the capacity of CareerPath, the Probation Service, Health Visitors, Youth Service and Youth Offending Teams to refer service users to basic skills provision.	Programme of training and awareness raising for advice and guidance professionals in place by December 2000 Strategy for training and awareness programme in place by September 2000	On-going training	On-going training	All partners to monitor through LLP and Post-16 Basic Skills Forum	CareerPath Library Service LEA
	Continuous, high profile publicity campaign:	Strategy for disseminating good practice in Eastershire, together with associated training, in place by September 2000 Orchestrated use to be made of publicity consultants and vehicles ongoing from January 2000				
	A substantial, wide ranging training and awareness raising programme with potential partners. This should accompany national campaigns and promotions	Series of awareness-raising events amongst potential partners held by January 2001	On-going promotion	On-going promotion		The Basic Skills Agency Colleges Chamber LEA

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
4.Quality Four key elements: Clear, unambiguous national quality standards A well-defined curriculum A credible set of qualifi-cations A new system of teacher training and inspection	Achievement by all providers of new BSA QM Improved inspection framework and quality assurance procedures by LEA, and those organisations with local mandates for quality control and assurance Compliance with national recommendations	Conference for basic skills tutors on new Quality Mark held by July 1999. Other events on QM to be held by April 2000. LEA QA procedures in place as part of Lifelong Learning Review by Dec 2000. All basic skills providers in county to achieve new QM by 2002	On-going review of quality procedures	On-going review of quality procedures	Lifelong Learning Services and individual providers Lifelong Learning Services Lifelong Learning Services and relevant partners All partners	
5. Curriculum Development of a national basic skills core curri-culum for adults based on well defined standards	All basic skills teachers to be trained in new curriculum All new and existing tutors to be appropriately qualified Development of local training programme to embed national recommendations:	County training programme in place within two months of publication of national curriculum All new and existing tutors to be appropriately qualified by 2002	On-going training	On-going training	Post-16 Basic Skills Forum	
6. Qualifi-cations and accreditation	All basic skills tutors in county to be qualified as recommended by 2003 Coursework-assessed qualifications to be complemented by new National Literacy and Numeracy Tests at levels 1 and 2	Implementation of national strategy through substantial staff development programme: Local training programme in place within two months of publication of new qualifi-cations for both providers and those in a signposting/ advisory role			Post-16 Basic Skills Forum	

Element	Activity	Target/Milestone			Monitoring/ Evaluation	Sources of Funding
		2001/2	2005	2010		
Teacher training recruitment and improved inspection	County recruitment drive, to include retraining of other teachers, and to be supplemented by strategy for wide-scale training programme:	Initial discussions with partners on possible strategy by December 2000. Strategy for training and awareness programme in place by December 2000 (in relation to those areas not owned solely by organisations) A programme for training for non-teaching professionals and volunteers to be initiated by December 2000	On-going training in place An additional 20 F/T/E basic skills staff working in Crayshire by 2002	On-going training in place An additional 60 F/T/E basic skills staff working in Crayshire by 2005	Post-16 Basic Skills Forum Post-16 Basic Skills Forum and individual providers	FEFC LEA
7. Planning of delivery	Local Lifelong Learning Partnership to have key responsibility for improving adult basic skills, and required to produce three year action plan	Common access to information about funding to be provided through regularly updated dossier on Learning Skills Councils, trusts, funding schemes, European Funding, companies etc. initially by December 2000, then on-going	Recommendation that Post-16 Basic Skills Forum as a subgroup of the Lifelong Learning partnership, meet twice annually to review plan, and that it establishes a working group to initiate progress on all identified areas, linked to, and informed by, local working groups.		Lifelong Learning Partnership	
8. Monitoring and Evaluation – summary of responsibility and accountability	Six monthly reports to Lifelong Learning Partnership prepared by Post-16 Basic Skills Forum (official sub-group). LLP to commission such additional requests for data collation it requires to inform planning. LLP to delegate operational decisions to Post-16 Basic Skills Forum.	Post-16 Basic Skills Forum to prepare full audit of data and progress for Lifelong Learning Partnership by July, 2002. LLP to re-evaluate goals and targets, and to review next planning cycle. Conference for partners and interested parties to be held by end of 2002.	Post-16 Basic Skills Forum to prepare audit of data and progress for Lifelong Learning Partnership by July, 2005. LLP to re-evaluate goals and targets, and to review next planning cycle.	Post-16 Basic Skills Forum to prepare audit of data and progress for Lifelong Learning Partnership by 2010.	Lifelong Learning Partnership	Lifelong Learning Partnership

Bradshire – about our County

BRADSHIRE is a rural county with a generally dispersed population of over 485,000, of which 392,000 are adults. Most towns have populations of less than 10,000. The density of population is the lowest in the South West at 136 people per square kilometers, compared with the England average of 375. Bradshire has an above average age profile, caused by older people coming into the county and 16-25 year olds leaving because of limited employment and higher education opportunities.

The county economy is poor, with a GDP of 30% less than the UK level and 1998 weekly wages averaging £271 compared with £327 (SW) and £352 (UK). Most firms are small enterprises, with 95% employing fewer than 25 employees. Much employment is part-time, temporary and seasonal (particularly for women). Over the last 5 years employment levels have been static or have fallen in 70% of Bradshire's businesses. Employers have identified problems with recruiting people with adequate basic skills. A quarter of unemployed people are seeking 'other' i.e. largely unskilled occupations. 30% of those registered unemployed are aged 45 or over.

There are 4 FE colleges, located predominantly in the west of the county. One includes a specialist agricultural college. In 1998/9 about 1,000 students in these colleges received basic skills learning support. Training Providers include basic skills work integrated into their vocational courses, but no separate records are kept of the numbers involved. The Probation Service recognises the significance of basic skills. It makes some direct provision and contracts other provision through Bradshire Adult Education. The county's primary basic skills provider, part of Bradshire Adult Education, is an LEA External Organisation funded by the FEFC and also holds contracts with the local TEC and the Employment Service. It has successfully bid for SRB, ESF, ACLF and BSCF funding to extend its basic skills provision and undertake development work. In 1998/9 it recruited 3,800 students and its 1999/2000 target is 4,750. Its management regrets the amount of time that has to be spent on bid writing and managing the complexities of multiple short-term contracts, at the expense of devoting time to supporting provision.

A Basic Skills Plan for Bradshire (2000-2003)

Our Vision

'Learning', as distinct from 'education' happens every day to people who are equipped to learn and have minds that are open to learning opportunities. People with poor basic skills frequently have limited horizons, poor self esteem and lack the confidence to seek out learning opportunities.

Our vision is for this group of people to regain a thirst for and openness to learning, improve their basic skills and increase their confidence and self-esteem to enable them to reach their potential.

We define basic skills as:

6**the ability to read, write, and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level to function and progress at work and in society in general.**9

Estimate of Need

The International Adult Literacy Survey published in 1997 provided an estimate of numbers of adults with 'significant difficulties' with literacy and/or numeracy, i.e. that their basic skills are below Level 1 for literacy and below Entry Level for numeracy. The Basic Skills Agency 'Survey of Need' CD ROM has been used as the basis for estimating need in the different areas of Bradshire.

Literacy

Of the 392,000 adults (over 16) in Bradshire, 14.83% are estimated to have literacy skills below Level 1. This means that the standards of literacy of about 58,100 people in the county are below that expected of 11 year olds (level 4 at key stage 2). Only 0.5% of people (1,960) in Bradshire are from an ethnic minority group, many being professional people with good English. The need for 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) provision is limited.

Numeracy

About 14% or 54,900 are believed to be below Entry Level, having number skills below that expected of 7 year olds at the end of Key Stage 1 in primary schools.

Distribution

There is an uneven distribution of people with basic skills difficulties across the county, as identified by the research referred to above.

- 31 wards in Bradshire have lower levels of literacy than the national average.
- 89 wards exceed the national average of people with very low numeracy levels.

Skills Levels

Skill levels of the people who would benefit from improving their reading, writing and/or maths range from:

- very serious difficulties, estimated to be about 20% of those with basic skills needs
- serious difficulties, estimated to be about 20%
- moderate or slight difficulties, thought to be about 60%

Adults above Level 1 but below Level 2 (equivalent to Key Stage 3, 11-14 year old standard) have not been included in the figures given above, but would also benefit from improving their basic learning skills. This level is recognised as the 'jumping off' point for access to semi-skilled jobs, further education and training.

Targets

- to reduce the number of people with poor basic skills by 50% by 2010
- to reduce the number of people with poor basic skills by 25% by 2006
- to reduce the number of people with poor basic skills by 10% by 2003

1. Approximately 38,700 people between the ages of 16-60 fall within the literacy skills needs category in Bradshire[1]. There are an estimated further 19,400 aged 60+. A total of 58,100 people need to improve their literacy skills. A similar number are below the lowest numeracy skills threshold. Assuming that about half are common to both groups, 20% of the adult population in Bradshire come within our global target, 78,400 people now and 99,400 by the end of next year, taking projected growth into account.

   Relating these figures to the estimated basic skill levels of the people who would benefit from improving their reading, writing and/or maths:

   - 19,880 have very serious difficulties, below Entry Level or Key Stage 1, 7 year old standard
   - 19,880 have serious difficulties
   - 59,640 have moderate or slight difficulties

1. Basic Skills Agency, *Survey of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Levels in Every District and Unitary Authority in England*, 1998

- still more people would benefit from improving their basic learning skills to help them to gain entry to semi-skilled jobs and benefit from further education and training

2. In order to meet the national target of 50% by 2010, 49,700 would have to leave the 'poor basic skills' category (assuming new entrants and those who die or leave the County are approximately equal).

3. Target for 2006: to reduce the number of people with poor basic skills by 25% equates to 24,850

4. Target for 2003: to reduce the number of people with poor basic skills by 10% equates to 9,940

5. In order to achieve these targets, substantially more adults with poor basic skills must be motivated to learn, and there must be a great increase in the numbers who achieve Level 1 literacy and Entry Level numeracy. The rate of achievement of functional basic skills is estimated nationally as one third of those in provision each year. This effectiveness rate must be increased and we must instigate a year on year programme of major increases in recruitment, retention, and achievement in existing programmes, and at the same time develop new learning opportunities.

6. In 1998/1999 about 4,800 students worked on their basic skills with educational providers in Bradshire, about a third of whom (1,600) are thought to have improved their skills to above functional basic skills level. We aim to improve this success rate by instigating a radical additional programme with greater effectiveness in upgrading basic skills. Most funding will be allocated to the wards with greatest need.

7. Realistic targets will be negotiated in different types of programmes, with regard to the nature of the client groups and their starting skill levels, in terms of:
   - numbers of students attracted (see F below)
   - retention for the time needed to improve skills beyond functional level (for those on flexible individual learning programmes, once on programme, 80% will access provision for at least 30 hours)
   - achievement of functional literacy and numeracy, evidenced by internal assessment, accreditation and by passing the National Literacy and Numeracy Tests when available (on average about half those recruited)
   - progression to further learning, employment and community activities (on average about a quarter of those recruited)

8. The introduction of National Literacy & Numeracy Tests will provide a common benchmark of achievement and a measure of progress towards targets across a wide range of learning activities. Too many adults are still intent on denying they have poor basic skills or that their skill levels matter. Bradshire will contribute local support for the national promotion campaign for the new National Tests, to help them to achieve credibility:
   - with employers, with expectation of inclusion on CVs,
   - with Further Education Colleges and Training Organisations to benchmark the levels of basic skills learning support to be included in students' programmes.

   Bradshire is committed to ensure that these tests motivate people to improve their skills, rather than de-motivating those who fail. Free, high quality learning opportunities will be offered to all who fail to achieve Level 2 or above on the Tests.

9. Mini study centre resource packs will be compiled to support basic skills in different contexts. They will include paper based materials, ILT equipment and software.

Promotion

1. Basic skills provision has always been in danger of becoming stigmatised and under-used. To avoid this situation, promotion will continue to focus on the application of basic skills learning

opportunities to the interests of the client groups concerned. Increasingly the focus is on ICT, but it also encompasses such concerns as oral communication skills in the workplace and supporting children's learning for parents.

2. Research shows that national media campaigns, particularly T.V. and radio are the most effective means of raising awareness. We shall target our own local media strategy to take advantage of national campaigns. Our personal contact strategy has always been effective, and this process will be strengthened by targeting other students and volunteers as a promotional source, using vouchers and 'introduce a friend' sessions. Other referral agencies will be encouraged to support this process, distributing fliers and vouchers to back up the referral process from employers, the Employment Service, Benefits Agencies, Careers Service, Health Service staff, Citizens Advice Bureaux, community and housing organisations, Probation Service, libraries, schools and churches. Basic skills awareness training will be increased for these agencies to ensure that those working with people with poor basic skills are able to identify and motivate them to improve their skills, providing guidance on the range of opportunities available.

3. Provision that integrates basic skills learning opportunities into the wider needs and interests of the client group will be arranged with agencies listed in 2 above. They will be encouraged to pledge their support for people with basic skills learning needs and work with the primary basic skills provider to develop outreach provision within their own organisations, encouraging members of the organisation to train to become 'learning supporters'.

4. Local media and press campaigns will focus on successes, encouraging the creation of 'Learning Champions' from diverse backgrounds, to promote the benefits of learning to people who lack the confidence to undertake learning challenges, to inspire others in the organisations to which they belong.

5. Bradshire will provide the local links to national campaigns such as 'learndirect' and 'Count me in', reinforcing the message through posters and leaflets and ensuring that a range of good quality provision is available to meet the needs of people who respond to the freephone call services.

6. We shall seek to use technology to promote and reassure potential students about what they can expect in our Bradshire Centres, by providing insights from existing students on Centre web sites and videos.

7. We will offer support to students who prefer to learn independently, via bookshops, the libraries and the Community Grid for Learning facility.

Learning Opportunities with target student numbers to end of 2003

A wide range of learning opportunities and programmes will be made available to meet the diverse needs of the people with basic skills needs, including the following types of opportunity, to recruit 19,900 students, about half of whom (9,940) will progress above the basic skills need category :

a. **Primary basic skills learning** – delivered through a network of learning centres based in the communities throughout Bradshire, running short courses, intensive provision and flexible learning opportunities including supported self-study, readily accessible to people in the locality; 9,500

b. **Programmes for unemployed people**, including New Deal, offering assessment and the National Tests on demand, backed up by access to learning support within vocational training, or intensive basic skills courses as appropriate, ICT for Employability – free 'Introduction to Computers' tasters which build in basic skills assessment and support; 500

c. **Workplace programmes**, tailor made to the needs of the employer and employees, from short oral communication courses in the

workplace which give vouchers for longer basic skills courses to more intensive Trade Union programmes which fund employee release time; 350

d. **Learndirect** (UFI) and other on-line learning which can be accessed from anywhere, with ready access to ICT and basic skills learning support; 6,500

e. **Community based programmes** which work with organisations in touch with people with basic skills needs, to integrate basic skills tuition into the wider needs and interests of the client group, including offenders and substance abusers; 200

f. **Programmes for parents**, including Family Literacy and Numeracy in every school in a deprived educational area; 500

g. **Basic Skills tuition in Colleges and Adult Education** will be built into the core requirements of courses that attract people with poor basic skills. In addition all entrants will be assessed for basic skills, and appropriate good quality learning support which relates to the needs of their courses will be built into the curriculum for everyone scoring below Level 2; 5,000

h. **Vocational and occupational training** courses – will be managed as 7 above; 1,400

i. **Programmes for young people** integrated into the wider interests of the group; 300

j. **Programmes for older people**, and those with disabilities and mental illhealth, to maintain their independence and contribution to the wider community; 300

k. **Self-learning initiatives**, using 'self-help' books and CD ROMS, promoted by bookshops, libraries, local referral agencies and the Community Grid for Learning, with the offer of free learning support as needed; 1,000

l. **Experimental Pilot Projects** initiated by anyone in Bradshire able to interest people with basic learning skills needs and work to minimum quality standards. Careful evaluation and dissemination of results will ensure ongoing support for and reproduction of successful programmes; 200

Quality Standards

1. Bradshire will try to ensure that all those seeking help with their basic skills are offered good quality programmes with clear learning outcomes suited to their individual needs, supported by effective tutors using appropriate materials. Assessment of skills and learning strengths and weaknesses will be used as a basis for negotiating clearly defined learning programmes. They will include a range of strategies to overcome difficulties and provide practice in applying skills to a range of contexts. Regular assessment and review of learner progress will enable the adjustment of programme content and length according to the level of skills required. A range of accreditation to suit the varied needs of students will continue to be made available, including the new National Tests in Literacy and Numeracy once available, to provide a 'passport' to employment and further learning and training opportunities.

2. All programmes funded via the Learning Partnership will be required to meet the minimum standards identified by the new Adult Learning Inspectorate and the local Learning and Skills Council. Meanwhile, our primary basic skills provider, Bradshire holds the revised BSA Quality Mark. Other providers of basic skills support will be expected to have achieved, or be working towards achieving quality standards by the end of 2001/2. Experimental pilot programmes may operate under more flexible quality guidelines, whilst meeting minimum standards of support.

3. Tutors of basic skills students will be recognised for the crucial role they play in developing a supportive learning culture, and will be trained to the high level of competence required to support people who need to learn how to learn and study, in addition to improving their basic skills. They will be trained to recognise and support learners with general and specific learning difficulties. They will know how to use the ICT tools and software appropriate to the communication and learning skills of their client group, so they can be adaptable to accommodate the wide range of situations in which provision may be delivered. Training will be arranged to support the implementation of the new curriculum and National Tests.

4. Volunteers will continue to be recruited, trained and supported in their role as Learner Supporters, providing individual support to enrich the learning experience of basic skills learners throughout the county. New Learner Supporters will be recruited from partner organisations, and trained to become key intermediaries in outreach settings appropriate to new groups of learners. The level of recruitment and training of tutors and volunteers will be increased to take account of the challenging targets, using new forms of training such as 'Basic Skills On Line' to increase the flexibility and scope of tutor training opportunities.

5. Curriculum development activities will be arranged to encourage collaborative working and extend the range of learning activities and resources for different settings, including independent learning.

Co-ordination and Monitoring

1. The Bradshire Learning Partnership has undertaken to avoid wasteful duplication of education and training provision, seeking instead to foster collaboration and the sharing of expertise. A county basic skills forum of all those involved in basic skills provision will be established, to plan and monitor basic skills work. Local district 'cluster' groups will meet regularly to ensure that developments have synergy.

2. Progress on the implementation of the plan will be rigorously monitored. It will be formerly reported at six monthly intervals to the Learning Partnership and, in due course, to the Bradshire Learning and Skills Council.

Conclusion

1. Bradshire has been at the forefront of high quality, innovative basic skills provision for many years, and willingly takes on the enormous challenge we now face in improving the basic skills of so many people across our very rural county. Above all however, we consider it vital to put in place supportive arrangements for planning, funding and inspecting basic skills provision which allow for the minimum of energy to be diverted from provision to management of the process. We recognise that the culture of short-term funding upon which the current very successful service has been built, cannot sustain a radical increase of the nature proposed.

2. All the plans to increase the impact of provision and ensure the success of participants are dependent on secure funding which facilitates making learning non-bureaucratic and enjoyable. We consider it vital that we replace traditional education with its culture of hierarchy and failure, in the minds of people who view education as being 'for the clever ones', with a new culture of learning for everyone, replacing 'IQ with Can Do'. We know that we will only achieve this 'step change' in attitude to, and involvement in, learning if we enable basic skills learning providers to focus on developing and sustaining the wide-ranging provision outlined here, rather than remaining locked into bidding for a multiplicity of short-term funding. Once the Basic Skills Plans are costed and funding is agreed by the local Learning and Skills Council, we will develop a coherent pattern of planning, development and evaluation on a termly cycle .

Overview

Aim	Objectives	Method	Via	Target Date	Milestone
A. Improve planning information	Map existing provision to improve planning coherence	• Questionnaire to all education and training providers • Collect more detailed data on levels of need for future planning	LIAG team All	August 2000 May 2000	• Information collected and collated, made available to all providers
B. Improve collaboration on basic skills provision	Establish Basic Skills Planning and Evaluation Forum	• Arrange Forum, invite all providers of basic skills learning opportunities to attend and agree procedures at county and district levels	Local Learning Partnership	September 2000	• Forum becomes an effective planning and evaluation mechanism for district implementation
C. Plan and evaluate provision for 2000 – 2001	Agree Basic Skills Plan and contributions from partners	• Circulate draft Plan • Agree content • Agree contributions to achieving targets • Review achievements, adjust plan and contributions as approp. • Agree Plan for 2001-2002	Basic Skills Forum	September October October March 2001 July	• Basic Skills Plan agreed and operational
D. Contribute to national and regional developments and targets	Build on established links with BSA and GOSW. Join local L&SC Committee	• Send delegates to national and regional conferences • Contribute to national and regional planning and development work • Adjust local plan accordingly	Basic Skills Forum Dec 2000	September ongoing	• Delegates sent • Contributions made • Plan adjusted
E. Improve the quality of basic skills learning opportunities	All basic skills provision to have achieved or be working towards Quality Standards	• All providers of basic skills to develop action plan to achieve Quality Standards • Request support from Bradshire and BSA as appropriate • Train all tutors in implementation of basic skills curriculum and ILT skills • Recruit and train new tutors and volunteers	All members	September ongoing	• All basic skills provision to have achieved or be working towards BSA Quality Standards • Tutor skills updated • 100 new tutors/ volunteers recruited and trained

Aim	Objectives	Method	Via	Target Date	Milestone
F. Enrich and expand existing provision	Strengthen existing provision, ensure new proposals are complementary	• Partners log existing provision in categories below and discuss broad proposals with group to agree contribution before implementation by districts • Discussion of ideas to strengthen existing provision	All members	September ongoing	• Existing provision logged and strengthened. Procedure agreed for future planning
G. Develop new provision	Identify opportunities for new provision, learning activities and materials. Develop and evaluate	• Opportunities for new provision, learning activities and resources identified and discussed • Development carried out and evaluated • Outcomes shared	All members	September ongoing	• New provision planned and developed in relation to existing and other members' developments

By Programme

Aim	Objectives	Method	Via	Target Date	Milestone
1. Primary Basic Skills Learning	Extend promotion, development and outreach activities. Encourage students to study more intensively, to achieve more in a shorter period of time	• Intensify promotional activity • Increase and train staff • Increase activity with all groups of students, incl. parents, low skilled employees, older people • Assess achievement of basic skills levels • Improve and extend premises where appropriate	Bradshire	FEFC Project funding	• 3,000 students recruited and on programme • Effective staffing of centres and courses, maintaining staff/student ratios • More intensive study • 1,500 to achieve functional literacy/numeracy • Improved premises
2. Provision for unemployed people	Further develop Basic Skills screening, assessment and provision in New Deal and other programmes for unemployed people	• Liaise with Employment Service to identify more people with basic skills needs and build appropriate support into their action plans • Extend and enrich basic skills learning embedded within vocational provision for unemployed trainees • Share good practice between providers	ES New Deal Gateway Providers FE Colleges and Training Providers All	New Deal, Training Credits, Training for Work	• Improved take-up of basic skills learning opportunities • Collaborative staff training • Good practice spread wider • 150 recruited • 75 achieve functional literacy/numeracy

Aim	Objectives	Method	Via	Target Date	Milestone
3. Workplace programmes	Liaise with local employers to develop workplace provision to meet the needs of employees with low basic skills	• Analyse the needs of workers with basic skills needs and the demands of their employment, customise provision • Offer communication skills workplace courses + vouchers for free basic skills provision in learning centres • Work in tandem with other workplace training provision, for coherence and progression	Bradshire Other workplace training providers	FEFC ADAPT	• Employers aware of training opportunities to meet the needs of their workforce • Employees value and take up basic skills opportunities. • 120 recruited, 60 achieve functional literacy/numeracy
4. learn-direct	Launch provision in the first centres	• establish UFI Centres, recruit basic skills learners, assess needs, pilot ILT courses, support learners	UFI Centre hosts	FEFC for UFI	• Centres and systems in place • 150 students. 75 achieve functional literacy/numeracy
5. Community based programmes including Healthy Living Centres	Work with local community organisations to embed provision into groups' activities	• Evaluate community organisations' needs, assist with capacity building • Identify and train learning supporters and basic skills learners • Provide materials and ongoing support and progression routes	Bradshire, local community groups	FEFC ACLF Project funding	• Outreach developed with community organisations • 10 learning supporters recruited • 40 learners recruited • 20 achieve functional literacy/numeracy
6. Programmes for Parents	Work with schools to support parents who would benefit from basic skills support	• Develop family literacy and numeracy provision and other provision for parents in all primary schools in deprived areas. • Develop programme for secondary school parents.	Bradshire Primary and Secondary Schools	Standards Fund ACLF	• Family literacy programme extended • Family numeracy programme established • Parent courses extended • 150 recruited, 75 achieve functional literacy/numeracy
7. Basic Skills provision in Colleges and Adult Education	Assessment and basic skills provision built into all courses likely to attract learners with basic skills needs	• Appropriate screening adopted • Range of basic skills provision developed and evaluated • Good practice shared	Colleges and Adult Education with FEFC assistance	FEFC	• Screening and provision developed and implemented • 1,500 students taking up basic skills learning support • 750 achieving functional literacy/numeracy

Aim	Objectives	Method	Via	Target Date	Milestone
8. Vocational and Occupational Training	Assessment and basic skills provision built into all courses likely to attract learners with basic skills needs	• Appropriate screening adopted • Range of basic skills provision developed and evaluated • Good practice shared	Vocational Training Providers	TEC	• Screening and provision developed and implemented • 500 students taking up basic skills learning support • 250 achieving functional literacy/numeracy
9. Programmes for young people	Basic skills integrated into the wider activities of groups working with young people not engaged in work, FE or training	• Develop appropriate activities to motivate and engage this client group in improving their skills as part of their other activities	Youth Service, Connexions, Life skills provision in Learning Gateway	FEFC Project funding	• Activities developed and piloted • 80 young people involved • 40 achieving functional literacy/numeracy
10. Programmes for older people and those with disabilities	Opportunities for older people and those with disabilities to improve and maintain their basic skills developed and extended	• Activities targeted at older people and those whose disabilities put them in danger of loosing their independence through having to rely on others to complete everyday tasks	Bradshire, Social Services, Local organisations	FEFC ACLF Project funding	• Activities developed and evaluated • 80 learners involved • 40 achieving functional literacy/numeracy
11. Self-learning Initiatives	Opportunities for people to learn independently, with learning support offered	• Work with providers of learning materials to offer free support to enhance individual learning activities • Offer free assessments of progress made	Bradshire Libraries Bookshops Community Grid for Learning	Project funding	• Support offered and tracking mechanism developed • National tests offered and impact evaluated • 100 learners involved • 50 achieving functional literacy/numeracy
12. Experimental Pilot Projects	Innovative activities sought, developed and evaluated	• New experimental pilot projects called for and developed by any agencies willing to explore innovative ways of engaging and supporting basic skills learning activities	All	Project funding	• Activities developed, piloted and evaluated • 50 learners involved • 25 achieving functional literacy/numeracy

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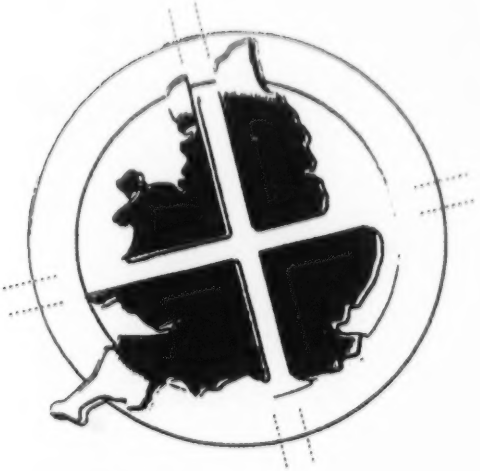

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